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## Crosscurrents: Spring 2011

Associated Students of the University of Puget Sound

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# Crosscurrents

*spring 2011*

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Last spring, *Crosscurrents* Vol. 51 Issue II was awarded the American Scholastic Press Association Award, ranking first place with special merit.

*Crosscurrents* would like to thank Susan Dory for her wonderful paintings, the professors who donated their time to review our Select Works, the English Department, the Art Department, the Humanities Program, Collins Memorial Library and the Office of Admissions for making this issue possible, and the folks at Photo Services — Kevin Curlett, Laurence Stack and Isabelle Chiosso — for helping out with our Art Photo Shoot.

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# Editor's Note



Fodder  
*hallie bateman*

This spring we feature our eighth Guest Contributor and first painter, Susan Dory. Dory's pale yet vibrant shapes interweave and mold over each other, emblematic of the interweavings and interdependence of society and its members, nodding to abstract economic forces and smears of protest paint in reaction to them. Forms wrap over themselves and hold each other together while others bulge to get out of the common grasp.

The way Dory's forms work in her paintings is much like how we understand this magazine — individual pieces of work that resist each other or create unexpected resonance but all bound together in one collective composition. In this edition we get back to the roots of the land we stand on by way of animal and jewel, a bee in a bellybutton and long-extinguished flames. With a surprising number of glasses of scotch (in the submissions, not the Editor's hands), we reimagine what it is to inscribe love into bodies and lower lips. The book will lead its reader through symbols of separation (like a high hat) and bounce its viewer between magnetized dividends — distances and resistances that somehow bring us balance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leah Vendl".

Leah Vendl  
*Editor in Chief*

guest contributor

# Susan Dory



Jenner (2011)

acrylic on canvas over panel, 48" x 42"



Pact 7 (2011)

acrylic on canvas over panel, 72" x 66"

*Susan Dory is a painter living and working in Seattle, WA. She studied art at Iowa State University and in Vienna. Exhibited nationally and internationally, Dory is included in many prominent public and private art collections, has been awarded large scale public art commissions and is the recipient of national and local grants, fellowships and residencies.*

# interview with Susan Dory

**Crosscurrents:** What brought you to abstract painting?

**Susan Dory:** I am interested in painting that which is not easily seen. I want the viewer to be able to bring something of their own to the viewing of the painting... I don't paint abstractly because of any conflict with figuration though. It's that these forms I'm painting seem to express my conceptual ideas accurately right now.

**CCR:** Elise Richman writes that your work “conveys optimism and concern about the double-edged nature of interconnection.” Can you speak to this?

**SD:** It's a big topic, but mostly it's about how our actions affect one another. The obvious examples tend to be more about politics and the interconnection that occurs with everything in life, a kind of unsaid human contract we have among ourselves and the responsibilities this interdependence places upon us which can be more positive, rewarding (like an honest democratic government system, or building consensus or someone throwing a surprise party) or brutal when it doesn't (pollution, global warming, sub prime mortgages, crime) and everything in between like from bad to good or unknown like the Revolution in Egypt, or more benign things like being stuck in a traffic jam...I mean it is (or can be broken down to) basically everything: politics, the weather, ecology, family, community, physics, religion, the police force, chaos, life.

**CCR:** What do think the role of painting is in an age when digital art is coming to the fore?

**SD:** I think to see the craft of the handmade is very important, to see the mark or impression of the human made or conceived... But I don't think any of the arts need to be in competition. I think artists use different media to express different content. So, painting is just a medium that artists use. It's like a language. English is no more important than Spanish or French, it's just another language.

**CCR:** What kinds of mark-making processes have brought you to the point you're at now?

**SD:** First, engraving in wax, next spray paint and stencils, then back to brushes and masking and pouring.

**CCR:** You “draw with tape” and pour acrylic paint into the shapes, correct? Can you describe your process more in detail?

**SD:** It's really an elaborate masking and stenciling process. It's more about using the tape line as a way to create composition; it is easily changeable, easy to move the tape around and see the potential line before I lay down the paint. It's just one of the many tools I use in creating the work. There are many layers in my work and in some of the layers I don't use any tape at all.

**CCR:** What about your near-pastel color choices and combinations?

**SD:** Color has a powerful impact; a more tinted palette can be less confrontational, like having to listen to someone who speaks very softly.

**CCR:** Your work used to be more uni-directional and linear. How did you come to your current shape making process and how do you understand the forms in your work?

**SD:** There's something soothing and methodical about the shapes I used to make, and I really liked them. I thought, what would happen if I activated those shapes, as if I pushed a button on a screen. How would they affect each other? How would then inhabit a 3-D space?

**CCR:** How do your commissioned and non-commissioned work differ from each other?

**SD:** Commissioned works have guidelines upfront and you must often work with a committee or at least some other people or person on the project. It can be tricky because there is an expectation for an end result. Non-commissioned studio work is about what you want to do.

**CCR:** What advice would you give abstract painters or artists doing commissions?

**SD:** Get everything in writing, know exactly what is expected.

**CCR:** Is there anything else you'd like to tell us or the students at Puget Sound?

**SD:** Learn to see your vision, hear your own voice, try all kinds of things, be disciplined, be fearless, paint a lot!

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# Pollen

*maggie shanahan*

Bees behind your ears are much worse than butterflies in your stomach. Mary had both, and she wanted to vomit.

Her thin hair wouldn't tangle. She had resolved to grow it long to hide the bees, but her uncle said come right away, so she only had two days to grow it. Two days is what it took to teach the bees to sit behind her ears, one worker on each side. The queen she kept in her bellybutton. That was the safest place. She trained them using spots of jam; the bees were crazy for jam. She had wanted to keep them in a box or anywhere but on her body, but that was too risky. Their exoskeletons might show up on the x-rays. You couldn't get anything through customs these days, and the government would never let her keep a troop of wild bees.

Mary tried to hide the fourth bee at the nape of her neck, but her straight hair did not make much of a cage, and this one kept wandering off. It wasn't weak with hunger the way the others were. Its sense of adventure threatened to give them all away. That morning as the boat approached the mainland, Mary put the fourth bee in a spot of jam on the deck and set her suitcase on top of it. Then she threw up over the side of the boat.

She spent two days biting her nails. She bit her nails because she couldn't tuck her hair behind her ears, and she had to do something.

The bees were hungry all the time. They ate behind her ears, making up for a starving summer. Every two hours, Mary lifted the

queen from her bellybutton, and the workers brought her digested jam. Queen bees didn't feed themselves. Mary remembered that much from summers at her uncle's farm. That's how she had known this bee

She tried to walk without moving and move without breathing, and she waited all the time for the workers to plant their stingers in her scalp.

was special. The worker bees were special, too. Mary had fallen to her knees three days ago when she found them in the yard, maybe the last wild bees in the world. And this one was bigger than the others, big enough to be a drone, but the way the workers cared for her she had to be the queen. Mary could imagine the workers collecting sugar from trashcans and candy wrappers and bringing it back to the floral chair where the queen must have sat all summer. She could imagine it, but it was still hard to believe.

The island was hardly fertile even before the bees disappeared. No one had wasted pesticides on its plants; maybe that's why these bees had survived there. Still, its metal yards were no place to resurrect a certifiably extinct species. Her wild bees would do better on the mainland where some crops still stubbornly grew.

Her uncle's mainland farm would be the best place. She remembered realizing this earlier in the week. She remembered her uncle's hope on the phone. ("Do you have any jam?") They sounded like spies even before they meant to. It wasn't a decision really. It was the only thing to do.

Mary paced the upper deck and tried not to squirm. Now that they sat behind her ears, she was sure she could feel the bees everywhere. She expected them in her socks, crawling out from her shoelace holes. She could feel them behind her knees and was always afraid to sit down. She tried to walk without moving and move without breathing, and she waited all the time for the workers to plant their stingers in her scalp.

At customs, Mary's face was hot and red, and the bees were agitated. They scrambled at her ears. She swore she could feel them on her chin. She had wanted to wear a scarf, but what if they made her take it off? And then what if the bees came off with it? The security officer eyed her warily.

"Seasick?" She imagined the queen depositing egg after useless egg in the corners of her belly button. Was it possible the queen held 10,000 eggs in her abdomen? Would she lose them all before they reached the farm?

"Yes."

"Bathrooms are that way."

"Thank you."

Mary walked head-down through the city where big, gray buildings poked holes in the clouds. The sidewalks were wet and leaky. Fog collected on the fabric petals of the plastic plants in the park. Tree structures carried convincing bouquets — yellow leaves that wouldn't fall — but their trunks weren't the initial-carving kind.

The jam jar was almost empty. If Mary were a giant, she could take three steps through the city. The skyscrapers would be splinters in her feet. She could walk in a minute to the farm, drop the bees in a tree, and they would all be safe. She wasn't a giant. The wind cut

through her shirt, bothering the queen, daring her to sting. If she stung, the queen would die, and then this whole thing would be for nothing.

Domestic hives had collapsed five years ago. Orchards emptied soon after that; their trees flowered but produced no fruit. Her mother's tomato plants had twisted into fists. What remained of their vegetable garden could fit in a flowerpot.

Colony Collapse Disorder was inexplicable until, three years later, it was explained. It was the pesticides in the air, on the petals, in the pollen, that infected the honeybees' hives, scientists said. Indoor farming saved the day. Agriculture was contained, farms were walled, and the few surviving bees were kept safe inside. Gradually, their colonies recuperated. They fed on state-sanctioned pollen, soft spinach blossoms and almond trees and barley. Scientists wore bee suits to keep chemicals in, and open-air farmers weren't allowed in greenhouses at all. Next year would mark the first honey harvest of the decade.

Mary bit into a \$15.00 pear. There had been hope, at first, that farmers might save their crops. Engineers measured the lengths of stalks and the widths of leaves. They experimented with pollen sprinklers, pollen clouds, pollen guns. The key was efficiency, they said in italics. In the end, the only thing that worked was manual pollination. Plant by plant, careful farmers dusted fruit into the barren blossoms. But paintbrush pollination failed to produce any substantial yield, and eventually the farmers gave up.

Mary hailed a taxi. They were so very close. The queen twisted around in her belly button, and they shared a nervous pulse. The workers hummed in her ears. The taxi rushed past buildings and

through brown, barren fields. Mary's queen would bring flowers to those fields again, and the plants would clean the open air.

"Here!" she pointed at her uncle's driveway, though theirs was the only farm for miles.

"Here!" she called to her uncle and cousins. They piled off the porch and met her in the garden.

Then, "here." She pulled the workers from their spots at her ears and set them gently on the dead, dry soil.

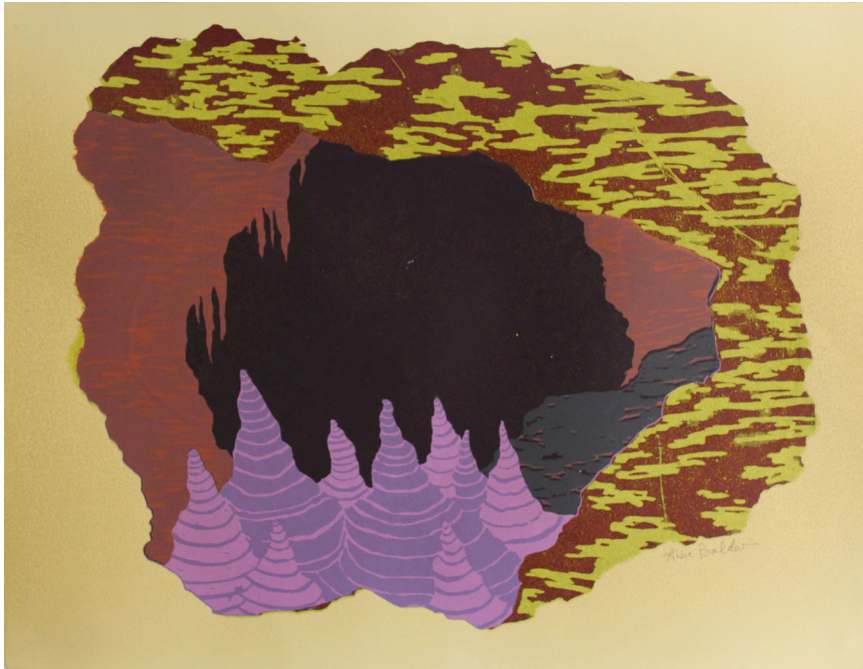
And, "here." She coaxed the queen from her belly button. The queen wrapped her legs around Mary's thumb.

"Oh, my dear." Her uncle's eyes watered as he took the queen in his hands. Crops would grow again. Blossoms would bloom. Dandelions would make wishes.

"My dear." Her uncle said. He looked Mary in the face, and her heart beat like the bees' wings once more.

He cradled the queen in his hands, looked at her pulsing abdomen, heavy with 10,000 eggs. He placed her lightly in the dead, dry dirt, stepped back, and shook his head.

"My dear, this is a drone."



Untitled  
 abbie baldwin  
 screenprint

# Gravity

andrei kozlov

We really had no say;  
 the days just  
 knocked us together  
 like the halves of a high hat,  
 left us both shaking even  
 when we stuck that way.

Of course, things settled gradually.  
 We kept records, gave quiet nicknames  
 to sounds and gestures.  
 We stayed in orbit  
 spinning along but always  
 with direction, turbulence to a minimum.



But the real test came  
with the threat of  
our own echoes.

When the tenor  
of our movement  
grew scarce,

we could make  
new tremors  
that rattled  
ethereal breath,  
pulling us back  
towards each other.

*opposite*

Melpomene

*kelsey roman*

*oil on canvas*



# Solid Legacy

*john derksen*

On a balcony overlooking the expansive city  
Three men shelter their eyes from the westbound sun,  
Which distorts their shadows as it dips.

They had set out that morning,  
Sweating glasses of scotch in hand,  
To solve the impermanence of body and memory —  
To steel themselves against the march of the years.

‘A statue of gold’ exclaims the statesman,  
Ashing a cigar over the edge.  
‘My young self gleaming before the courthouse’  
He says before sinking  
His graying moustache in the scotch.

‘They will melt you down once your wealth dries up.  
Better one of stone — laced with my own faults’  
Says the general, wringing cracked hands.  
‘I will be a mountain range  
Remembered as a man, not a demigod.’

‘You’d crumble and warp, noseless like the sphinx,  
Till your rocky face looked worse than your decaying skull’  
Says the cardinal, hunched under the years.  
‘Best one of glass — that confluence of elements  
Which holds air and water as solid  
With my crystal features rendered smooth —  
Of course I need no statue, for I have my faith.’

The dust motes expanded the falling sun’s hues, yet  
Something more than scotch twisted in their stomachs.

$\text{CaCO}_3$   
*kelsey wilburn*

Your heart is a cockleshell and I work my hands into pleats of calcium carbonate until I am covered in pink dust and you're nothing but smooth.

Remember, you whisper. To nothing, or the sea, or the vastness of being. Or maybe just me standing alone in the kitchen.

And I'm remembering. Remembering your gray sweater, the way your fingers could circle your wrists, the way your bones looked like topographical maps in lamplight. I'm remembering you cooking pasta over the stove and asking me why I was so memorable. Because it's hard to leave people like that.

You were so afraid of being forgotten. Of being cast out like fishing lines at night, thin thread across a deepening ocean. You thought earthquakes had the power to swallow you up.

But I'm remembering. I'm remembering you asking me not to follow, not to call, not to whisper your name into dead phone lines at night because you knew I was a poet and poets were prone to do those sorts of things.



blue  
alea robertson  
watercolor

# Sickled Sloth

*mackenzie abernethy*

A fellow's spread flat, just beneath banal sheets  
looking fairly withered-down.  
His strawberry seed eyes cast to the ceiling  
that seems to stare ripely back  
at the decadence of this boy's fruit  
and his lack of any maps.

So useless did maps  
seem to him there, snug in an envelope of sheets,  
where he lived everyday eating only canned fruit.  
Always, before gulping it down,  
he'd mechanically peel back  
its terrible tin can ceiling.

Should he dare to dream, he would see the ceiling  
as a woman with tattooed white ink maps  
down her spine, contrasting the dark of her back.  
With him still in the sheets,  
she imagines peeling them down  
like the thick skin of some strange fruit.

From the cracks of his teeth, poke out common fruit  
as he'd decide to confided in his ceiling,

"I'm tired of always lying down."  
Then the godsend, Google maps,  
would answer his prayers, in sheets  
of directions away — none of them leading back.

The ceiling would worry he wouldn't come back.  
"While I'm out, help yourself to some fruit,"  
he'd say, to which she'd pull the sheets  
over her head and sigh deep. A ceiling  
has no place on maps  
since readers only ever look down.

Front steps would shepherd him down.  
But behind his blindly turned back,  
the ceiling would hold suspect the maps.  
There, she would raise the fruit  
of her loom, alone, an apple-crumbled ceiling.  
But he doesn't dream — just lies lazy in sheets.  
He reads maps, if you count the veins of his eyelids when down.  
All he knows are these bedsheets and scratching his back.  
But man needs food, and fruit decays too — just ask the ceiling.



# Easter Sunday

sophie pattison 1998

I can still feel the checkered imprint of the starched nylon tulle on my legs as they dangle from the third row pew. I feel the minute slices of each crisscrossed wire while every word the pastor drones adds an ounce to my hanging feet — and he has words enough to bind us in our seats until old Mrs. Flannery's second coming. Mrs. Flannery, who sits in the first row and whose only son smells of cat food and T.V. dinners.



Vanitas: Moth and Flame  
louise blake  
oil on canvas



Untitled  
*tedra hamel*

# In the Autumn Mists

*james merrill*

(The Empress)

Our thrones were built on crumbling fields  
Where we had let our dreams lie fallow.  
The whole open sky  
Could not consume our childhood  
Nor catch our darting eyes.

You left me love notes etched in stone  
And hid in pine copses to watch me read them.  
But I mistook them for metaphor  
And wrapped my arms about the ethereal.

Betimes you thought to lay us on the fields  
And teach me the dance which the gods taught you,  
That we might till the fields in our passion  
And sow within them a bountiful harvest.



You showed me wonders of steel and stone  
And courted me with the stars.  
But I was already amongst them,  
And your gifts were unneeded symbols.

When I awoke,  
And all the earth about me was quiet,  
You had gone.

Your parting note,  
Carved in granite relief  
And topped with a crown of stars,  
Left no hope of return.

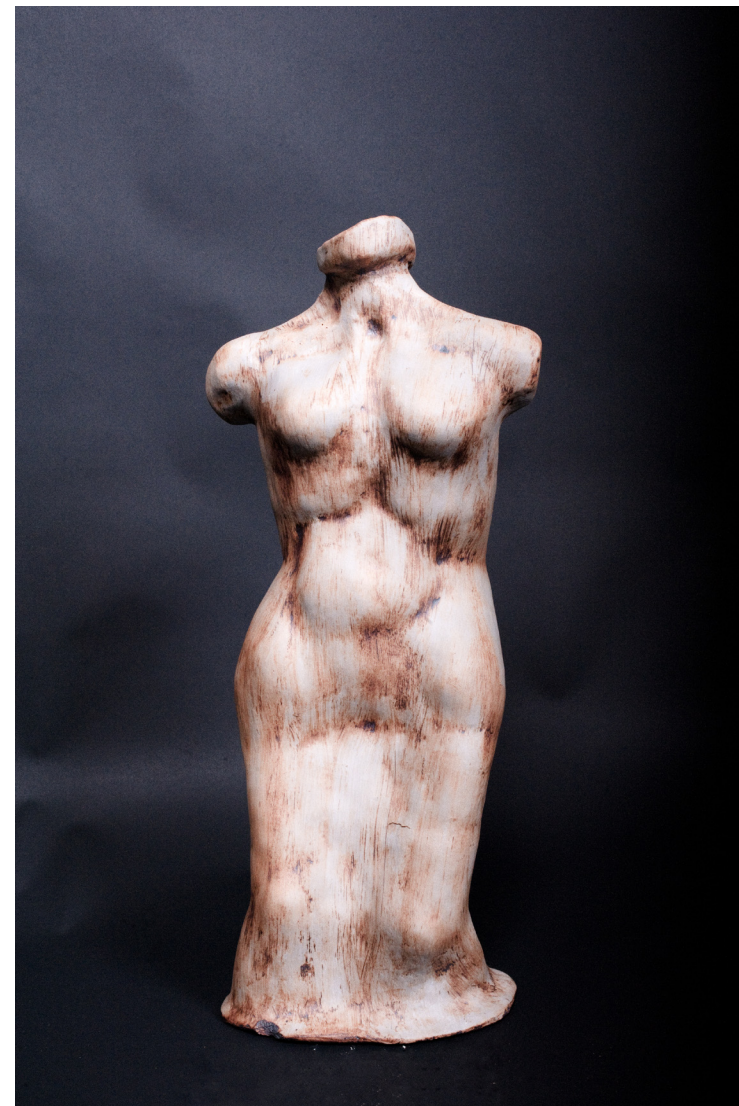
“The time has come for the putting away”  
I could read no further.  
For the childish things I’d made for you  
Were all that I could offer.

*opposite*

Woman

*tasha adams*

*clay*



# Sound

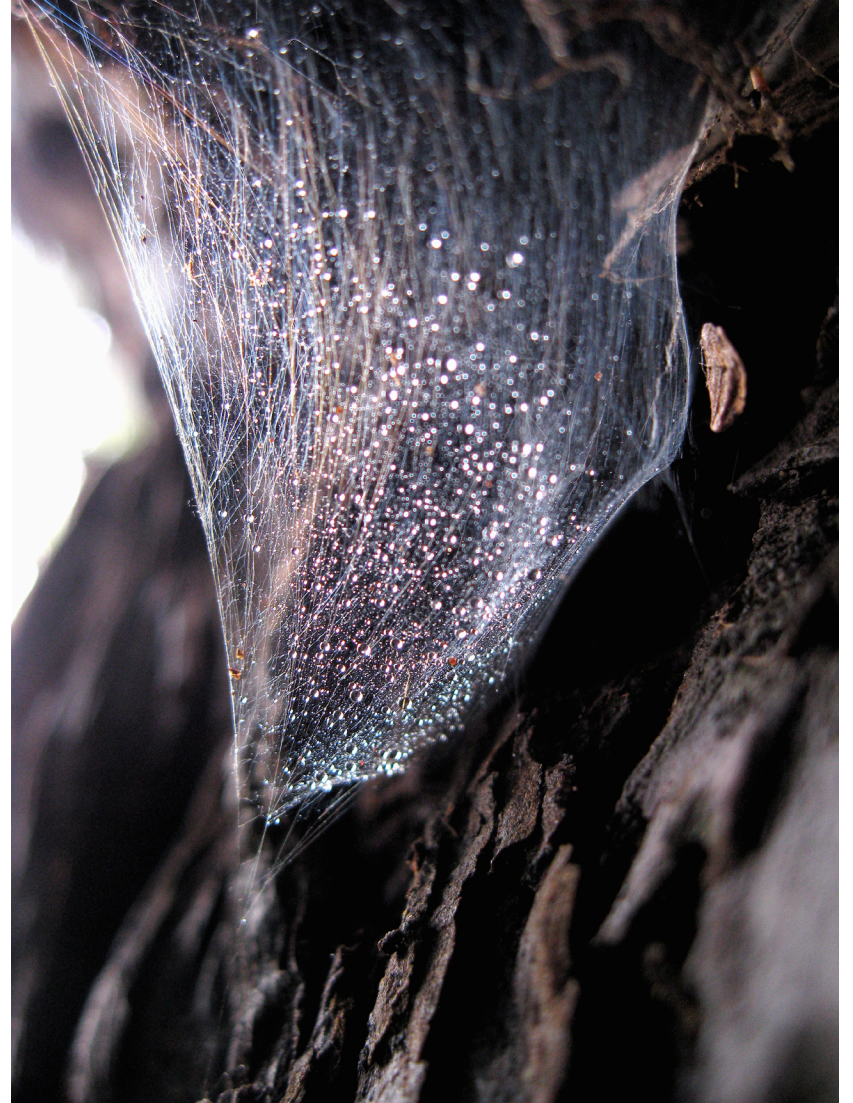
*kelsey wilburn*

The sea froze over —  
you stood  
at the kitchen table,  
rearranging the flowers.

*opposite*

## Spiderweb on a Redwood Tree

*cameron jasper*





# Select Works

*The Anvil // andrei kozlov*  
*Traveled // tamara lodgson*  
*Long Division // james gaines*

## The Anvil

*andrei kozlov*

This morning, mom and I moved my uncle out of his room above the Empire Boxing Club, about four months after his shaking hands dropped a coffee mug on our kitchen floor. We were done before noon; the only things we had to pack were a cardboard box of personal relics and a duffel bag filled with clothes that stank with old sweat.

Mom tells me that I should have seen him in his prime, when he was the welterweight champion of the Detroit Amateur League. During the third or fourth round he would sometimes drop his hands to his sides and let his opponent take a few free shots. If they hit him hard enough to move him backwards or knock his head to the side, he applauded the challenger by slapping his thick red gloves together and patting the guy on the shoulder. By the next round, once his opponent had worn himself out, my uncle would float around the ring on the balls of his feet, throwing out quick jabs until he connected with his right cross on the poor guy's chin. He was known across the city for his endurance, mom tells me. They gave him the nickname "The Anvil."

Now I'm helping him hang up old photographs in what used to be my room, the smallest bedroom on the ground floor. Mom is in the kitchen, on the phone bargaining with realtors who want to buy the Empire and turn it into condo space. My uncle sits on the edge of the bed, hunched forward, shuddering quietly from the tremors in his arms and neck. The blows that once fell against his body so harmlessly finally seem to have reverberated all at once, like the echo of a hammer against something hard.

# Prose Review

by tamiko nimura

A dropped coffee mug. A series of defeated boxing opponents. A lifetime's residence moved from second floor to ground level. Everything falls in Andrei Kozlov's microstory, "The Anvil." Thus, through an admirably succinct three paragraphs, Kozlov portrays the decline of the speaker's uncle, a former welterweight boxing champion turned trembling man.

We see the uncle first through his shaking hands: a seemingly small characteristic for some, but death to the career of one who lives by the strength of those hands. The speaker tells us that it takes less than a morning to move the uncle's possessions into a single box, a pathetic mimicry of the uncle's single room. In that second paragraph we're charmed by verbal snapshots of the uncle in his prime: the hero who encourages, applauds, and even pats his opponents on the shoulder. We marvel at the speed and grace of the uncle's fists, which belie his stolid nickname, "The Anvil."

Yet it's the final paragraph that makes us focus on the narrator's role in this story. The narrator is half of an assisting "we" in the first paragraph, a passive listener to his mother's stories about his uncle in the second paragraph. However, in the third paragraph, the speaker's mother has moved into another room entirely, while the speaker helps his uncle move into his old room. By hanging old photographs there, the speaker is merging the uncle's past with his own. In Kozlov's concluding image, then, we find that the uncle's life "reverberates" not just physically, in the uncle's still-shaking body, but in the narrator's consciousness of family history, and in our startling sense of life when it's absorbed "all at once."

*Tamiko Nimura lives, works, and writes in Tacoma. As assistant professor at the University of Puget Sound in English and African American Studies, she taught classes in writing and multicultural American literature for seven years. She is writing "her own private MFA" at <http://www.kikugirl.net>.*

# Art Review

by morgan sims

I love the detail in this drawing. The soft shadows in the mountain, the worn metallic surface of the horseshoe, and the complex twists of the root structure keep my eyes busy and invent visual spaces I can get lost in. The careful handling of materials and the symmetrical composition also give this drawing impact. The drawing feels confident and it is engaging. The way the imagery is isolated against a clean white background convinces me that the drawing is intentionally composed and asks me to read the images as symbols.

I enjoy that this drawing creates more questions than it does answers. While I might attempt to read the upside-down horseshoe as a symbol for luck, or lack thereof, over a specific northwest mountain, I understand that choosing a literal meaning is not the point. Overall I get a sense of grandiosity from the mountain with its peak and its numerous valleys, but also a sense of co-existing worlds from the more imaginatively drawn roots beneath the surface. Because the horseshoe is a man-made object with pop-culture references, its juxtaposition hovering over naturalistic imagery creates interesting new ideas. Graphically I am reminded of the Paramount Pictures logo, but I also think of the artist Ed Ruscha who played with visuals and language by drawing or painting words in a style that mimicked their sound or definition.

*Morgan Sims is teaching Lithography and Screen print, Art 101, and Art 130 at Puget Sound this semester. He studied printmaking at the University of Washington, Seattle and recently received his MFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He creates and shows work primarily in print and on canvas, although he sometimes works with neon, video and animation.*



Traveled  
tamara logsdon  
graphite

# Long Division

*james gaines*



The smoke kept the  
snow from falling

onto the growing  
mass

of oil and pine wood and  
maple. Birch trees

shook in the yellowing  
light,

mixed between the  
dying of the

day and the  
growing of the fire.

Divisions cracked  
amongst the wood, and ash

insinuated itself  
into the snowline.

Kerosene lamps grew  
soot

at the edge and the  
glass shattered.

Lovers plunged  
headlong

into wedges and  
split

like logs kept burning  
from the inside out.

Here, a house burned to the  
ground

and the forest reached  
upwards like bare radii and

ulnas,  
forearms that showed

scars from the cutting,  
as someone called it done

and cracked their limbs in two.

# Poetry Review

by bill kupinse

James Gaines's "Long Division" begins with a statement whose verisimilitude those raised in snowy climes may question: "The smoke kept the / snow from falling..." (Yes, the poem gets more specific as to where the smoke prohibits snow, but bear with me for a moment). Readers familiar with winter bonfires may think *no*, recalling that snow falls just up to a flame's margin, happily passing through smoke to be sublimated into steam by the fire itself.

But in Gaines's poem, smoke thwarts snow — without qualification in the first stanza — just as other, more overtly impossible events transpire: "Lovers plunge[] / headlong // into wedges and / split"; "the forest reache[s] / upwards like bare radii and / ulnas"; "someone call[s] it done."

How do these elements cohere in the poem? Renaissance artists mixed their own paint, pestling cochineal shells, indigo, and fermented madder in a mortar of linseed oil. Only once the paint was mixed could they use color to connect their forms. Poets still make their own metaphors from scratch, as Gaines does so masterfully here, before adding the figurative hue that joins act to act, form to form.

So is "Long Division" — its enigmatic title suggesting at once economic calculation, physical sundering, and the expansive timeline of the natural world — a poem that describes a fire that burned? No, despite the feint of the past tense, the poem is not a poem about a fire: it is the fire itself.

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# Day-Trip

kyle nunes

In glad chatter Don Quijote, his squire Sancho and somebody's cousin whiled away the Manchegan afternoon. They roomed in a small village at night. "We're two leagues from the Montesinos Cave and a fine day-trip," the cousin remarked offhandedly. "You'll need rope to anchor yourself if you rappel into its depths." Quijote was determined to see where the abyss stopped. He bought a hundred armspans of rope.

The next day, the party arrived at the yawning mouth of the cave. It was lipped with buckthorn and fig, mustachioed by an intricate undergrowth of blackberry brambles that blinded then swallowed a diver whole. Sancho and the cousin dismounted and began to harness up Quijote, binding and cinching. "Your Mercy, don't entomb yourself like a flask of wine cooled by the earth," said the sidekick.

"Tie me and shut up," Quijote ordered, stepping to the edge and adjusting his bragueta. "I was made for this kind of thing."

Quijote judged that rappeling wasn't possible without the use of force. Putting hand to sword, he demolished the undergrowth. The racket sent up a murder of gargantuan crows and rooks, so weighty in body and time that they pitched the errant knight to the ground. The knight wasn't a supersititious Catholic, but if he had read auguries,

he would have felt an ominous humor heave in his throat. He would have fled from the anomy of the grotto.

The avian nocturne of hellbirds and bats ceased. Quijote stood up, fed rope to Sancho and the cousin and pushed off into the cavern. Sancho crossed himself a thousand times — spectacles, testicles, wallet and watch — and threw down a benediction as his señor traversed earshot: "May the Lord guide you and the Pine of France, you flower, cream, and froth of knight errantry!" He peered into the billowing darkness and pulled at an earlobe with a boobish, brutish knuckle. "There he goes."

The cousin said the same thing and after thirty minutes, in which only dust clouds and silence bobbed from the pit, they felt a nip at the rope.

*This is an exercise in translitics. Selected passages from chapter 22, book 2 of Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote, about the knight's descent into the Cave of Montesinos, were translated from the Spanish and used to stimulate an eclipsed, tongue-in-cheek prose-poem rendition of the adventure.*

# Santa Anas in *sandrarosa bryant* L.A.

when the Santa Anas blow  
carrying eucalyptus leaves  
in between the skyscrapers and  
half-priced clothing stores of Downtown,  
you complain about the damage to  
the perfectly-shaped dimensions of your afro.

you pick out and reshape your curls and coils  
as we walk on a sidewalk strewn with  
red needles from the flowers  
of bottlebrush trees.

I laugh at your vanity  
as your laments strengthen along with the wind.

on a more temperate day, I'll tell you  
that I'll always be around  
even on the days when  
your halo fails to be well-rounded.

You Are My Past  
*nick kelley*







## Chambers Bay

jenni denekas

oil and collage on wood

# Burning Day

abby greff

It was lucky, maybe, that the spring the school burned down, nothing else had happened in Crawford for a long time, except a month-long drought that accompanied the unseasonably hot weather and turned the new grass from green to brown by mid-April. There hadn't been much else. We hadn't had a murder in years, decades maybe, and even car accidents were infrequent at best. There had been a string of convenience store robberies, all of them occurring at the one Seven Eleven on the edge of town over a three-month period, but when it turned out that the culprit was in fact the local Congregationalist minister's fourteen year-old son, all the money was returned at once and people stopped caring.

So the day the fire happened, the last day of class before summer, people were on the edge waiting for the extraordinary and they didn't even know it. The fire probably would have been enough to satisfy the town for years worth of block party gossip, if only Katie Mackay hadn't been inside when the school went down. As it happens, I gained a lasting place of notoriety that day just because I happened to be in the second floor girl's bathroom ten minutes before flames engulfed my school, and so did Katie.

I had walked out of the cubicle, and she was standing there, her lower back resting against the plastic counter. She smiled at me, her hands tapping against the denim of her jeans. "Hey," she said.

I nodded at her and went to the sink. This was, in seventeen years



of knowing each other, probably the first word she had ever spoken to me.

“Do you smoke?” she asked. Her eyes sparkled when she asked and her chin tilted towards me, the picture of potential rebellion.

I shook my hands, watching the suds slide off my skin and into the basin. “I don’t,” I said.

“Damn it. I don’t either. I’ve got a lighter and I don’t even smoke. I figured I might give it a go today, though. Just for the hell of it. Last day of school and all.”

I shrugged. “Sure,” I said. “Why not?”

She laughed, high and clear, and the sound bounced from mirror to wall to dirty, cracked floor in the tiny cavern of the room. “Why not? Hey, how’d you do on that algebra test?”

“A ninety-five. What did you get?” I asked.

“Seventy-nine,” she said. “What did you get wrong?”

“I got five points off my graph for that rabbit population problem,” I said. I waved my hands under the dryer and watched the silver droplets fly.

“Oh yeah. The rabbit problem,” she said, tapping her chin with a single finger. There were glints of gold in her champagne pink nail polish and they sparkled in the light as her finger moved. “That the one about all the rabbits dying?”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah,” she said. “That one was a bitch. Fucking rabbits.” She turned around and faced her reflection and I walked out the door and that, as far as we can tell, is the last time anybody saw or spoke to Katie Mackay. Her last words were “fucking rabbits.”

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I was back in Spanish class when the fire alarm screeched to life. We went outside, all five hundred of us in the building, and lined up in our designated spots in the field behind the school, sweating in the noonday sun.

“It’s a drill,” Casey Atwood said. She pulled her long, thin, blue cotton skirt close around her legs and sat in the grass, her ankles crossed in front of her. “It’s always a drill. They just have to choose the worst kinds of days for these things, either snowing or sweating.”

“Oh, it’s obviously a drill,” Laura Morgan agreed. Laura always agreed with Casey, because Casey was beautiful and Laura would never be. “I didn’t smell any smoke, and our classroom is right next to the cafeteria. Where else would there be a fire?”

Casey rolled her eyes and pulled a piece of grass off her skirt. “Who cares where a hypothetical fire would start? There isn’t one, because this is a drill.”

Just then, six windows on the second floor blew out with a sound like a shotgun blast. Flames and thick, black smoke crawled out from each gaping hole as the broken glass crackled and shatter against the asphalt below.

“Holy shit,” said Casey.

She was right. The fire took three hours to put out completely, owing in large part to the steady influx of cars and pedestrians who stopped to gaze in wonder and block the front parking lot for the fire trucks as tendrils of flame snaked their way around the building. By the time it was over, there wasn’t much left except the first floor entrance hall and three walls of the gymnasium. The first sparks had just caught on the paper thin grass of the field where we stood, waiting, when the hoses finally succeeded in dousing it.

While the firemen around us grappled equally with curious townspeople and twenty foot flames, the teachers stationed in the field took attendance. It was a perfectly executed fire escape plan, except when all was said and done and counted, they were two people short. The first was Katie Mackay, who no one, except for me, had seen since she left her second floor biology class for the bathroom. The second was Lionel Berkin, who also should have been in biology. He had long, mud brown hair and talked slow and couldn't read a picture book to save his life. He often skipped class in favor of smoking below the bleachers on the football field. When that location turned up empty, however, the teachers panicked. They sent search parties into the woods, the lower fields, the junior class parking lots across the street. The great mass of floating bodies on the field broke and solidified into huddled, whispering groups as the news about Katie and Lionel spread.

Lionel showed up during the second hour of firefighting. He emerged from the woods that separated our school from the ancient farmhouse next door, trudging up the gently sloping hill in a ripped black t-shirt and a cloud of scented smoke.

"Oh, thank God," his teacher yelled when she saw him, and surprised everyone watching by pulling him into a crushing hug. "Where were you? Katie? Were you with Katie?" she asked him.

Lionel blinked slowly, his eyes as red as the flames climbing behind him, and coughed. He turned and stared at the glowing building, the walls slowly charring and collapsing one by one like sheets of burning paper, the picture reflected in his wide eyes. "Wow," he whispered.

"Lionel, Katie! Do you know where she is?" the teacher asked again.

"Katie?" he said, still gazing at the fire. "Who's Katie?"

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They found Katie's body in the front foyer of the school when the smoke was still clearing and the ash was still settling, and everyone said it was a miracle she had been in the only part of the school left standing, because at least her parents had the consolation of a real body to bury. The final cause of death was ruled smoke inhalation, and the firemen who found her said later in the papers that she didn't have a burn mark on her body, just a few spots of ash on her clothes and a slight bluish tinge to her skin. They found her three feet from the front door.

"It's such a shame," my mother said a few days later, when the news had long since reached every corner of the county and the papers had informed us all that the police and fire departments had received the official results of their investigation into the fire's origins. There had been talk of calling in experts from a bigger city, like Worcester, or even some place as far away as Boston, but in the end, the town had thought it best to just deal with the issue privately, since Katie's own uncle had been sheriff for thirty years before retiring and she still had two cousins on the force. They could handle it.

"Yes," I agreed. "It's really sad."

"The papers said it could have been started by electrical failure. Or maybe arson. Or maybe both," she told me. I had read the papers too.

"How could it be both?" I asked. "It's either one or the other."

"Oh, I don't know. You should read the article. The fire chief explains everything."

"Okay," I said.

My mother shook her head. "Her poor parents. Did you know

her well?" she asked me.

"No, not really. I didn't know her at all, really."

"That's not true," my mother said. She was cutting tomatoes at the counter for our dinner that night. I watched the silver edge of the blade stop halfway through the soft, red flesh as my mother thought about Katie. "You did girl scouts with her in elementary school. Her mother was your troop leader in third grade. You don't remember?"

"Oh," I said. I tried to remember Katie as a child, maybe with pig-tails or braces, but all I could think of was the way she looked the last time I saw her, just before she died, her curly blonde hair loose around her shoulders, her jeans ripped at one knee. Her lips curling in a lopsided grin as she asked me for a cigarette and talked about fucking rabbits. "I guess I do. But still. I mean, I didn't know her recently. That was like, ten years ago."

My mother nodded and resumed chopping tomatoes. "I know, I'm just saying. There'll be a funeral. You'll need to go. Will you go? Your whole grade will go I imagine."

"They will. I'll go."

"Good," she said. She shook her head and made a tsk-tsk sound with her lips as she scooped the tomato bits into a bowl. "Her poor parents," she said.

The wake and the funeral were held a week later at St. Matthew's Catholic Church downtown, across the street from the junior high. Our whole grade went to the wake and most of the town went to the funeral. Katie's mother cried and held her two younger daughters, one under each arm, the whole time, even when her turn came to give the eulogy. Her father, the principal of the elementary school, was as blonde as Katie had been. He spoke his turn at the podium, his black

work suit pressed and stiff and solemn like his face, and then took his seat in the front pew and didn't move again for the rest of the service. Katie had a lot of friends and her family knew a lot of people, so the service went on for hours, everybody who it seemed had ever met her delivering tearful testaments to the sanctity of her character. When I got home after, I was surprised to see vague mascara tracks running down my own face.

It was only a few days after the funeral that the police and fire department's official report changed from unsure to probable arson, and they admitted to having a suspect. They said they knew where the fire had started now too: the second floor girl's bathroom, and from there it had spread across the entirety of the school. Exactly two weeks to the day after the fire, the police picked Lionel Berkin up at his house for questioning concerning arson and the murder of Katie Mackay.

Suddenly, the evidence for Lionel's involvement seemed both endless and irresistible. Casey's boyfriend, an older guy who had graduated a few years before, had just joined the Crawford fire department, which made Casey our de facto expert on Lionel, Katie and anything flammable.

"He smokes, you know," she told us one day. We were sitting at a table at a little café, enjoying the milder weather, and all anyone could talk about was the fire and Lionel. "He carries a Bic lighter around with him all the time. He got suspended for three days once in English class for whipping it out and trying to burn his test, you remember that?"

"Just because he smokes doesn't mean he's an arsonist," our friend Eliza said from the other end of the table.

Casey glared at her. “Maybe not. But it’s something to think about. He had access to gasoline, too. His stepfather owns that garage right on the town border with Denton. It would have been easy for him to just steal a can, sneak it in there and boom —” she stabbed an olive from her salad with her fork, “— the whole school goes down.”

There were murmurs up and down the table. “Yes, but,” I said, “they searched his room yesterday. They didn’t find anything.”

It would’ve been easy for him to just steal a can, sneak it in there and boom —

Casey ate her olive and waved her fork in my face. “It doesn’t matter,” she said. “By now, he could have gotten rid of the evidence ten times over. The fact is, he’s suspicious. Where exactly was he when the alarm went off, anyways? I know, I know, he said he was in the woods getting high, but he could have just as easily set the fire, run out of the school before the alarms went off, and hidden in the woods so it looked like he wasn’t involved. The guy’s a creep.”

“A total creep,” Laura agreed.

“The fire started in the girl’s bathroom. Why would Lionel be in the girl’s bathroom? Katie was in there too, wouldn’t she have seen him doing it?” Eliza asked.

“Yeah, and how did she get out? She had to have somehow ended up on the first floor. Did she run through the fire and down the stairs?” I asked. Eliza nodded.

Casey groaned, slamming her hand down against the metal of the table. “Oh my God, why can’t you people seem to understand

this? Lionel definitely did it. He’s weird. He hated school, he would definitely burn it down if he could.”

“Everyone hated school,” I said. “That doesn’t mean we all actually decided to set it on fire.”

Casey looked at me, her eyes hard. “If Lionel wasn’t in that bathroom to set that fire, than you know there’s only one other person who we know was there and could have done it. Just what are you implying?”

I thought about the way Katie looked at me, looked at herself in the mirror of the bathroom that day. I thought about the fact that Katie had a lighter too and bit my tongue until Casey started talking about her boyfriend’s new car.

Casey, it seemed, spoke for everyone. Lionel’s case went all the way to district court, and the courtroom, on the day of the trial, was brimming with Crawford residents waiting for the conclusion of what had proven to be the most exciting event in town history. Both Katie’s parents and Lionel’s mother gave speeches right before the verdict came in delineating the many virtues of their children. Katie’s parents spoke about her excellent grades, her promising future cut short, her purity, her innocence. They brought up the girl scouts and her altar service and her volunteering at a homeless shelter one weekend a month. I wondered if they knew that she wanted to start smoking, and that she had only gotten a seventy-nine on her algebra final.

Everyone knew that Lionel’s mother loved a drink, but to her credit, she showed up that day dead sober, her hands shaking and her eyes roving in her head as she took in the jury, the judge and all of her neighbors seated behind her. “He’s a good boy,” she said. “Lionel’s a good boy. He’s slow, and maybe his future isn’t so bright as that little

girl's was, but he knows right from wrong. He's a good boy." Lionel sat in his Sunday church suit and his cheap pleather shoes and stared out the window.

In the end, Lionel was acquitted. There just wasn't enough evidence for the jury to do anything but send him on his way back home with his alcoholic mother and his squeaky shoes. Unlike with Casey, the fact that he smoked, had access to a garage and may or may not have been the first one out of the school that day for whatever reason was not enough to prove to the jury beyond reasonable doubt that Lionel Berkin had started the fire which killed Katie Mackay. "It's bullshit," Casey said as we exited the courthouse. "Complete and utter bullshit. How could they let him off like that?"

I shrugged. "Maybe he really didn't do it."

"No. No, that can't be it," Casey said, biting at her lip. "I know he did it. What other possible explanation is there? You heard what her parents said about her. Everyone loved Katie. Nothing else makes sense."

I thought suddenly that maybe I was the only one who ever actually met the real Katie, the one time I ever talked to her thirty minutes before she died, and that maybe, it was easier if no one else ever knew her. I shrugged again. "It could have been electrical failure. That was the first theory."

Casey looked at me, her lip curving up in disgust. "God, you would. That's the most boring explanation I've ever heard. No, it was definitely arson, or I'm gonna kill myself right now."



Untitled  
michelle leung

# Instructions Left on a Bar Napkin

*nick schwarzenberger*

Sweep the wind up into your pockets and head west:  
sell it in California.  
Teach the children to cut it into lines and snort it —  
it will change them.

The storm will roll through their veins,  
swindle the hearts of their dreams  
and let their brains err out.  
They will hunger for the unexpected —  
they will be as airy as the Tarot's Fool.

Heading north, keep some in your pockets —  
you won't need your friends anymore.  
They'll be shoveled into back alleys and mallcop jobs,  
necking with alleycats  
as geriatrics throw bricks at them.

Keep your paper white.  
Bleach it if you need —

This is crucial.

Everything you write will be a promise,  
and enough promises on one sheet of paper  
snowball into a marriage contract  
which will soak the soil of new desire.  
Crop rotation is, after all, a venerable tradition.

Pretend you can't remember where you placed your face —  
you'll fit right in on Sunset Boulevard.  
Legends say if you snort enough blow,  
the tingling behind your skin, nose, eyes... is your phantom face,  
removed with umbilical cord and foreskin when you were born.  
Parents hate seeing themselves.  
But the children, all air, will stare.

Keep north along the coast,  
take rubber bands and knot your pants shut.  
Some joker once said Redwoods are phallic, and like calls to like —  
spotted owls are peeping toms.

The wind probably feels restless by now,  
as Seattle crystallizes about you.  
Do not let it out.  
By night beneath the overpass,  
it will transform into a child the size of your hand,  
it will bear a staff from which hangs a lantern,  
and it will inspect the ground.  
By its light you will see the consequence in every step you stole.  
We write cursive on the inside of our lovers' lips when we kiss.  
We don't always write our own names.



# Morocco Calls

*kate schwend*

Messenger, I'll sleep on the roof of your straw castle,  
I'll brush my teeth by the light of the Saharan moon.  
There's a bench in Agadir where  
the girls eat grapefruit with steak knives,  
cats and prophets on every corner.

O Mohammed, what is this place, the farthest west?  
The streets are red, the houses blue,  
and on the air hang the haunted chants:  
They're calling the faithful,  
They're calling the devoted,  
They're calling the faithless,  
They're calling the dead.  
And every day from far away  
They're calling me too.



New Growth  
*elizabeth newton*

# White Stones

*kyle nunes*

You awake under ice,  
austral clouds that stop breath in midair.  
Jewels of breath gleam like the belly of fire. Vapor condenses,  
sears the skin of your cheek and an afterlife star burns Antarctic.  
A pale molerat riverrock weighs your palm. You recall gravity.

Today you are bedside,  
in the birthing room of your children.  
A priest whispers prayer into your ear and  
fills your skull with ruby light.  
Fear overcomes your soul when a buffalo head, teeth  
like deepwinter larchlimbs,  
eats your earthly body. A stampede of black oxen pulp your bones,  
throw up mud.

But the plumb of the prayer lulls you,  
preserves you under a sheet pinned with four white stones,  
the fifth sinking into your empty belly. The beast cannot trace  
you here.

Rewind: You're tending bison at the base of an observatory in Navajo  
country.

When you ask your bearings, a coyote-eyed woman says I am your  
daughter and  
you shrink because Memory lies to you.  
Coyote Woman washes your scalp, patches of hair unpeel,  
bind together a cosmic film: You feel like a baby in between wombs,

face-up in a porcelain sink, seeing your mother's eyes again, eyes that  
slip  
between the dogeared lines of 35 millimeters projected on a starched,  
clean sheet.

Her palms buoy you in baptismal waters and her gentleness grabs you  
back to the room with a crone whose love is honey in her hands,  
sap of boredom, amber time.

So, you summit the crevasse backwards, climb the inward passage, foot  
by foot,  
lower your whole being into acid, sapphire lakes.  
Your skin is eaten, the waxen statue of the days oozes over the surface,  
sublimates to pure thought — you go wan.

Now, guard the knowledge of color and be gone.



